

Health & Safety Newsletter

A Positive Outlook Can Save Your Life

Is your glass half-empty or half-full?

How you honestly answer this age-old question has merit in the way you view your attitude and how you think. If you answer "half-empty," you are most likely a pessimist, and being a pessimist can adversely affect your health. Studies have shown that pessimists (people with negative attitudes - doom and gloomers) are more likely to develop heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, depression, smoke, and/or live an unhealthy lifestyle.



Positive thinkers, on the other hand, often have less stress (or at least deal with it far more effectively), sleep better, and are generally happier people. In fact, a positive person often enjoys a longer life, and most definitely, has a better quality of life. But... if you are one who's thoughts tend to run on the negative side, and your outlook on life isn't all that rosy, you can LEARN to be more positive.

Understanding positive thinking and self-talk: Positive thinking doesn't mean that you keep your head in the sand and ignore unpleasant situations. Positive thinking just means that you approach the unpleasantness in a more positive and productive way. You think the best is going to happen, not the worst.

Positive thinking often starts with self-talk. Self-talk is the endless stream of unspoken thoughts that run through your head every day. These automatic thoughts can be positive or negative. Some of your self-talk comes from logic and reason. Other self-talk may arise from misconceptions that you create because of lack of information.

Identifying negative thinking: Not sure if your self-talk is positive or negative? Here are some common forms of negative self-talk:

Filtering. You magnify the negative aspects of a situation and filter out all of the positive ones. For example, say you had a great day at work. You completed your tasks ahead of time and were complimented for doing a speedy and thorough job. But you forgot one minor step. That evening, you focus only on your oversight and forget about the compliments you received.

- **Personalizing.** When something bad occurs, you automatically blame yourself. Your friends cancel a night out, and you assume that the change in plans is because no one wanted to be around you.

Catastrophizing. You automatically see things worst case scenario. Small things become huge in your head. Your waiter spills your coffee, and your whole day is ruined... think the same about others as well.

- **Polarizing.** You see things only as good or bad, black or white. There is no middle

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You feel that you have to be perfect or that you're a total failure.
You tend to think the same about others as well.

Focusing on positive thinking: You can learn to turn negative thinking into positive thinking. The process is simple, but it does take time and practice — you're creating a new habit.

- **Identify areas to change.** If you want to become more optimistic and engage in more positive thinking, first identify areas of your life that you typically think negatively about, whether it's work, your daily commute, or a relationship, for example. You can start small by focusing on one area to approach in a more positive way.
- **Check yourself.** Periodically during the day, stop and evaluate what you're thinking. If you find that your thoughts are mainly negative, try to find a way to put a positive spin on them.
- **Be open to humor.** Give yourself permission to smile or laugh, especially during difficult times. Seek humor in everyday happenings. When you can laugh at life, you feel less stressed.
- **Follow a healthy lifestyle.** Exercise at least three times a week to positively affect mood and reduce stress. Follow a healthy diet to fuel your mind and body. And learn to manage stress.
- **Surround yourself with positive people.** Make sure those in your life are positive, supportive people you can depend on to give helpful advice and feedback. Negative people may increase your stress level.
- **Practice positive self-talk.** Start by following one simple rule: Don't say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to other people. Be gentle and encouraging with yourself.

Practicing positive thinking every day: If you tend to have a negative outlook, don't expect to become an optimist overnight. But with practice, eventually your self-talk will contain less self-criticism and more self-acceptance. You may also become less critical of the world around you. Plus, when you share your positive mood and positive experience, both you and those around you enjoy an emotional boost.

Practicing positive self-talk will improve your outlook. When your state of mind is generally optimistic, you're able to handle everyday stress in a more constructive way. That ability may contribute to the widely observed health benefits of positive thinking.



Avoid Aggressive Driving

Don't Provoke, Don't be Provoked

Each year, aggressive driving results in more than 1,500 fatalities and thousands of serious injuries. A study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that 56 percent of fatal traffic crashes are caused by Aggressive Driving behaviors.

Aggressive driving, sometimes referred to as reckless driving, usually involves one or more of the following dangerous behaviors:

- Speeding or Driving Too Fast for Conditions.
- Tailgating or Following Too Closely.
- Improper/Unsafe Passing, often without signaling.
- Improper/Unsafe Lane Usage, cutting off another vehicle.
- Obscene gestures and/or use of the horn out of anger or frustration.

Engaging in these hazardous driving behaviors may constitute a criminal offense of reckless driving. It may escalate into road rage and often results in crashes that involve loss of life and serious injuries. The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) reports that the likelihood of a commercial motor vehicle being involved in a crash increases significantly when the driver has been convicted of one of these hazardous actions. For example, a driver that has been convicted of Reckless/Careless/Inattentive/Negligent Driving has a 64 percent greater likelihood of being involved in a crash.

All drivers should follow these tips to avoid the dangers of aggressive driving:

- Allow ample time to get to your destination safely.
- Obey all posted speed limits and slow down if conditions warrant a slower speed.
- Don't tailgate. Following Too Closely reduces a driver's visibility and reaction time.
- Never attempt to pass a vehicle unless it is safe and there is plenty of time to do so safely.
- Never make obscene gestures or use your horn out of anger.
- Remember the three Bs: be courteous, be patient, be forgiving.
- Avoid alcohol or drugs before or during driving.
- Buckle up! It is your last line of defense.

Remember, seat belts save lives.



Remember, if a driver has been Negligent Driving, their likelihood of being involved in a crash goes up 64%.

Clay Cormier
DOT Safety Manager

Portable Gas Detectors: AKA Personal Monitors

Breathing hazards such as hazardous gasses can be a danger to all types of workers, including those in the oil and gas, water treatment plants, metals refining and processing, and chemical plants. To keep safe working in these environments, workers need to carry a range of personal protective equipment including respirators, and portable gas detectors. If a sudden shift in air quality occurs, workers need to know immediately.

Portable gas monitors alert users when toxic gases are present, and the environment becomes dangerous. Alerts may set off a range of different signals, such as flashing lights, vibrations, or a loud noise. Workers then quickly leave the area. Many toxic gases cannot be detected by smell or sight, so workers need to have another way of detecting hazardous gases. Most portable gas monitors also include digital interfaces that display the amount of gas in the air.

These devices are usually the size of a smartphone and should be clipped onto the person's clothing. But many workers may not know where portable gas monitors should be worn on the body. Let's set the record straight and talk about the proper way to wear a portable gas detector.

What is the breathing zone?

Workers tend to have lots of different opinions when it comes to where they should wear their portable gas monitors. They may wear them on their belt, shoulder or shoe, but none of these locations accurately capture the quality of the air that the person is breathing. Safety professionals know that there can be a great difference in gas concentrations between the waist and the nose/mouth area of the workers face. That's why workers should always wear their portable gas detectors in what's known as the "breathing zone," such as the lapel, shirt collar, or chest pocket.

Just as it sounds, the breathing zone is where a person inhales air, including the mouth and nose. Although some workers may find it uncomfortable to wear on their lapel, if the portable gas detector is not worn near the breathing zone, there's a chance the device won't record accurate information about the worker's exposure.

For portable gas detectors to work, the gas needs to reach the sensors on the device. Some workers think detectors come with a wide detection range, such as detecting gases up to five feet away. OSHA, though, defines the breathing zone as, "a hemisphere forward of the shoulders within a radius of approximately six to nine inches."

Workers who wear fall protection harnesses or high visibility vests actually may find it easiest to wear the monitor. The webbing on the harness offers a prime place high up on the shoulder strap to clip a portable detector. Similarly, the high visibility safety vest may likely good spot for attachment. Note that only a relatively robust surveyor-style vest will hold the typical gas detector without sagging.

Employers should educate employees on why it's important to wear portable gas detectors in the breathing zone. Workers should also be quick to correct workers who wear their personal gas detectors in the wrong location.

WEAR YOUR MONITOR PROPERLY~~IT WILL SAVE YOUR LIFE!

Lauren Vincent
Industrial Safety Manager



Birthdays



March Birthdays

Robert Miles- 3/2

Cody Thompson- 3/11

Colby Frey- 3/15

Brian Medvick- 3/22

Dru Spady- 3/23

Billy Beaudeau- 3/24

Robert Turner- 3/26

Work Anniversaries

March Work Anniversaries

Jerome Maksyn- 3 years

Wilmar Marin- 3 years

Hillary Rougeau- 4 years

Chuck Guintard- 5 years

Brandon Pillsbury- 6 years

Clean DOT Inspections

No Clean DOT Inspections were received in the month of February.



What did you learn?

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Positive thinking doesn't mean that you keep your head in the sand and ignore unpleasant situations. Positive thinking just means that you approach the unpleasantness in a more _____ and _____ way.

2. List two tips that drivers should follow to avoid the dangers of aggressive driving:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

3. Portable gas monitors alert users when _____ gases are present, and the environment becomes _____.

If you return this portion completed to the Safety Department by March 31st, you will be entered into a drawing for 2- \$25.00 gift cards. Good Luck!